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A request for data on youth and drugs

In examining a possible antidepressant-suicide link, the House called on pharmaceutical firms.

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BLOOMBERG NEWS**

Pfizer Inc., Wyeth, Eli Lilly & Co. and GlaxoSmithKline P.L.C. have been asked to turn over to the U.S. House unpublished results of studies on children and teens taking antidepressants, a subcommittee said yesterday.

James Greenwood, the Pennsylvania Republican who is chairman of an investigative panel of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, sent the companies letters seeking the information. Both Wyeth and Glaxo have significant operations in the Philadelphia area. Federal regulators separately are examining whether antidepressants raise the risk of suicide for people under age 18.

"The U.S. psychiatric establishment has repeatedly assured the public that the drugs are very safe," Greenwood said in the letter. "On the other hand, some psychiatrists and advocates are concerned that mainstream psychiatry is biased by widespread financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry."

The House Energy and Commerce Committee oversees the FDA. Greenwood, a former social worker, has led the committee's investigative panel in probes into ImClone Systems Inc.'s handling of its Erbitux cancer medicine application for approval and HealthSouth Corp.'s accounting.

Wyeth has received Greenwood's letter, dated yesterday, said Doug Petkus, a company spokesman. "We're evaluating it," he said. Glaxo intends to cooperate with Greenwood's request, said Mary Anne Rhyne, a company spokeswoman.

An FDA committee on Tuesday urged the agency to warn doctors and parents more effectively about the potential risk that children and teens using antidepressants might attempt suicide.

The Washington Post last week reported that some companies did not disclose the results of studies in which antidepressants were no better than placebos in treating children. Greenwood said that report led to his demand for as-yet-undisclosed information about the medicines.

Drugmakers routinely seek to publish the results of studies that favor their products in peer-reviewed publications such as the New England Journal of Medicine. Doctors and researchers help select the research to be published.

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